

# Recommendations and Priorities

## APPROACH

The Technical Assistance Team prepared draft reinvestment recommendations (presented in written and map form) summarizing the findings of the Asset Profile and the ideas from Focus Groups and visioning workshops which had received a high level of support. Cluster Board members and stakeholders reviewed and revised these draft reinvestment recommendations in two working sessions. Each draft recommendation was discussed to clarify its intent and to propose revisions, if needed. Additional reinvestment recommendations were proposed. Participants then voted to determine whether there was significant support for the draft recommendation. Those recommendations which did not receive majority support were dropped from further consideration. Where there were strong differences of opinion, minority positions were discussed and recommendations were either revised or the minority opinion was recorded. Participants also selected the three draft reinvestment recommendations under each planning topic (Neighborhood Commercial, Housing, Job Centers, etc.) that they felt were most important to the future of the Cluster.

The results of these working sessions were summarized in brochure format for stakeholder review. Stakeholders were asked to review the brochure (including a color map of proposed reinvestment target areas) and indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with (or were not sure about) each reinvestment recommendation. Stakeholders also indicated their top three priorities in each planning topic.

The results of the stakeholder review demonstrated that there was a high level of support for all of the reinvestment recommendations and that stakeholders endorsed the proposed priorities. All of the reinvestment recommendations were supported by 83% or more of the review responses; most reinvestment recommendations received 90% or better support.

## REINVESTMENT

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cluster 3's reinvestment recommendations are presented below. Priority recommendations are shown in bold type.

### Neighborhood Commercial

#### General

1. **Encourage an increased range and improved quality of neighborhood-serving commercial uses (particularly grocery stores, restaurants/entertainment and hardware stores) to meet**

# Recommendations and Priorities

resident needs and “capture” an increasing percentage of stakeholders’ consumer expenditures within Cluster 3 and the City.

2. Coordinate the location of neighborhood commercial reinvestment target areas for the next 5 – 10 years with the locations of (1) housing reinvestment target areas and (2) concentrations of stable housing.
3. Give particular emphasis to promoting small, locally owned and operated retail and service business development, especially African-American owned and operated businesses. (See also Job Centers.)
  - Provide technical support and facilitate access to financing by establishing a small business/entrepreneurship center within the Cluster.
  - Provide affordable space to lease in incubator buildings located to capitalize on market potential.
4. Establish a Cluster-based business development organization (or a consortium of existing organizations) to:
  - give Cluster stakeholders a strong voice in shaping commercial development plans/decisions for the area by ensuring that residents and local businesses are represented on the Board of the organization;
  - forge consensus on policy directions and funding priorities for the Cluster;
  - encourage locally owned and operated business start-ups and facilitate the formation of partnerships between local entrepreneurs and successful local and non-local business people/investors;
  - work with the City in assembling land, obtaining financing, capitalizing on development incentives and reducing red tape to promote commercial reinvestment;
  - document the buying power/unmet market potential of the Cluster in order to encourage investment; and
  - assist in marketing commercial reinvestment locations and encouraging investment.

# Recommendations and Priorities

5. Review and propose modifications to existing zoning regulations to promote an appropriate mix of uses in commercial areas and to ensure that appropriate setbacks, landscaping and screening are provided.
  - Ask the City to help reduce the detrimental impact of retail liquor outlets on reinvestment by engaging the State Legislature and Liquor Control Commission in evaluating enabling legislation for Specially Designated Merchant's (SDM)/Specialty Designated Dealer (SDD) liquor licenses and encouraging the creation of new legislation that reduces the quantity of licenses consistent with population loss over time.
  - Enforce zoning regulations.
  - Prepare design guidelines for commercial development and establish a design review board.
6. Work with the City to coordinate infrastructure investments (utility and street lighting upgrades, road and sidewalk improvements, park improvements, city services etc.) with neighborhood commercial investments in target areas.

## **Small scale, Neighborhood Serving Commercial Development**

7. Encourage numerous neighborhood scale commercial developments to provide shopping opportunities within walking distance of residents.
8. Build on existing, successful commercial areas with a "main street" development pattern and a pedestrian orientation. Encourage the consolidation of neighborhood commercial uses in these target areas.
  - Kercheval at Parker
  - Jefferson (south side) between Montclair and St. Jean
  - Jefferson (both sides) between Coplin and Alter
  - Warren at East Outer Drive
9. Encourage the development of new small scale commercial concentrations (25,000 - 50,000 square feet on 5 acres or less) at:
  - Van Dyke near Gratiot;
  - Mack at a selected location/block front between Van Dyke and Cadillac;

# Recommendations and Priorities

- Mack at a selected location between Cadillac and Beniteau;
- Mack and Alter;
- Warren at a selected location between Outer Drive and Mack;
- Warren at a selected location between Cadillac and St. Jean; and
- In planned housing development/improvement areas such as Islandview Village (on Lafayette); East Village (on Jefferson) and the proposed Grainmark development (on Jefferson west of St. Jean).

## **Large scale, Cluster Serving Commercial Development**

10. Capitalize on the high accessibility, visibility and central location of the Warren/Conner intersection as the preferred location for a large scale commercial development (200,000 or more square feet) by working to improve the existing shopping center at Warren and Conner and promoting new development to the south and east.
  - Encourage a mix of uses in this renovated/expanded commercial concentration including retail, entertainment, community services (e.g., day care), non-retail jobs and civic spaces.
  - Encourage a design approach which maximizes walkability and includes pedestrian and transit links to job centers, Chandler Park, and neighborhoods.

## **City Serving Commercial Development**

11. Solicit input from residents and businesses in the entire affected market area when development of any city/regional scale commercial center (over 200,000 square feet) is under consideration.

## **Commercial Strip Re-use**

12. Formulate strategies to promote an appropriate mix of new uses for those commercial strips which are not viable today and which are not identified as neighborhood commercial reinvestment target areas, for example:
  - townhouse and apartments (affordable to a range of household incomes);
  - institutions and professional offices;
  - green space; and
  - attractively designed parking to support adjacent commercial uses.

# Recommendations and Priorities

## Housing

### General

1. Encourage housing reinvestments that:
  - maintain the stability of intact neighborhoods where housing conditions are good and values are stable; and
  - reinforce ongoing initiatives for housing improvement that are showing signs of success.
2. Encourage new housing development, rehab and infill in areas that have experienced significant disinvestment and improvement efforts are not yet underway. Select target areas for new housing construction, rehab and infill reinvestment that:
  - contain enough vacant, assembled land to create a critical mass of new housing;
  - are located to build on a stable (or successfully revitalizing) neighborhood edge; and
  - master plan these areas as mixed-use communities including commercial, civic and service uses, open spaces and a range of housing opportunities (owner, renter, mix of prices, lot sizes and architectural styles), rather than developing them piecemeal.
3. Give highest priority to providing quality housing affordable to low and moderate income households, while also providing housing to attract middle and upper income households. Encourage a mix of housing prices and household incomes in all Cluster communities.
4. Work to increase rates of home ownership in the Cluster to between 50% and 75% of all households.
5. Improve property maintenance/appearance by working with the City to define strategies for improving code enforcement with increased citizen involvement.
  - Provide frequent code inspections with stakeholders working in partnership with code enforcement officials to identify and report code violations and monitor compliance progress.
  - Assign specific code enforcement officers to serve the area (possibly based at Neighborhood City Hall).

# Recommendations and Priorities

6. Develop a more cooperative relationship and attitude between building inspectors and non-profits, developers and individuals undertaking housing improvement efforts (both rehab and new construction) to make inspection approval criteria explicit, apply those criteria consistently and streamline the inspection and approvals process.
  - Improve citizen awareness of inspection criteria and procedures.
  - Involve citizens in reviewing/revising inspection criteria.
7. Increase the availability of low-interest loans for housing maintenance/repair and rehab, including a review of appraisal criteria which limit loan amounts and deter reinvestment.
  - Provide training to increase the number of city residents qualified to serve as appraisers.
  - Offer local (Detroit-based) appraisal companies the opportunity to bid on City contracts.
8. Establish programs for increasing the number of qualified housing developers and contractors active in the City of Detroit. Give special emphasis to increasing the number of Detroit-based and African-American developers and/or development partners and contractors, and promoting increased representation of African-Americans and other minorities on work crews
9. Assist non-profit housing providers to increase their technical expertise and improve their capacity to successfully administer housing improvement and development programs.
10. Seek out organizations which could help to fill the special needs housing gaps in the area, especially housing for very low income residents, seniors, and the disabled.
11. Work with the City to identify alternatives to waiting for property to be abandoned and assembled (through tax reversion) including the possibility of (1) offering owners in areas experiencing significant disinvestment an opportunity to trade their equity in their current home for a down payment on a better home in a better neighborhood and (2) allowing land (in areas of severe

# Recommendations and Priorities

disinvestment) to be assembled and maintained by a Cluster-based development organization until the timing is right for redevelopment.

12. Work with the City to coordinate infrastructure investments (utility and street lighting upgrades, road and sidewalk improvements, park improvements, city services etc.) with housing investments in target areas.

## Locations

13. Capitalize on the concentration of vacant, city-owned land in the Warren-Jefferson-Conner-Alter area to plan a new community including open space and commercial, service and civic uses, housing rehab and infill, and the construction of new for sale and rental housing in different price ranges. Prepare a plan for phased implementation with input from community groups and citizens.
14. Target programs and resources to maintain the stability of the area's "strong" neighborhoods and to stabilize areas showing early signs of disinvestment and decline. (See Housing Condition Survey)
  - The northeast corner of the Cluster
  - Indian Village and West Village
  - The majority of Block Groups west of Burns (I-94 to Jefferson between Burns and Bellevue)

The kinds of programs/resources needed in these areas might include:

- strengthening neighborhood organizations and community building activities (Spring Cleanup, community gardening/greening projects, parties/picnics, etc.);
- spot demolition;
- low interest home repair and improvement loans;
- concentrated code enforcement activity (in partnership with neighborhood "watchdogs");
- crime watch; community policing; and
- infrastructure improvements (road paving, street lights, parks, etc.)

## Recommendations and Priorities

15. Target programs and resources to reinforce the success of housing improvement initiatives already planned and underway:

- Islandview and West Village areas (Kercheval to Jefferson between East Grand Boulevard and Van Dyke) - new single and multifamily housing; rehab and infill;
- East Village area (Kercheval to Jefferson west of Cadillac) - rehab and infill;
- Fellowship, Inc. housing improvement target area (between Warren and Mack from Seminole to McClellan) - rehab and infill; paint-up/fix-up;
- Graimark area - new housing and rehab;
- south of Freud and west of Conner (Clairpointe area) - affordable single family housing;
- south of Averill from Alter to Lakewood - rehab and infill; paint-up/fix-up; and
- Morningside Commons area (between Warren and Mack) - new construction; rehab and infill.

The kinds of programs/resources needed in these areas might include:

All of the strategies listed in 14., above, PLUS:

- strengthening non-profit housing development organizations;
- providing resources to support master planning and coordination among organizations;
- tax incentives (freeze or forgiveness on improvement value) for rehabs;
- low interest rehab loans;
- "home buyers club" and low-interest mortgages;
- subsidies for housing rehab and infill/new construction to make housing affordable to lower income households; and
- transfer of city-owned surplus property to qualified non-profits

16.

Build on stable neighborhoods and ongoing housing investment initiatives in the area west of St. Jean by targeting resources and programs to encourage rehab and infill in the following areas:

- the area bounded by Fischer (W), Cadillac (E), Mack (N) and Kercheval (S); and
- the area bounded by Cadillac (W), St. Jean (E), Mack (N) and Jefferson (S).



# Recommendations and Priorities

The kinds of programs and resources needed in these areas include some combination of all of those listed above in 14. and 15., above.

## Job Centers

### General

1. Promote the creation of more jobs by concentrating on entrepreneurial support and small business recruitment and start-up, especially in the retail and service sectors and for African-American owned/operated firms by developing, and seeking funding for:
  - a small business/entrepreneurship center to provide business planning and technical assistance/support and facilitate access to financing; and
  - affordable space to lease in "incubator" buildings, catering to different business types (e.g., retail, small scale manufacturing/production, recycling).
2. Give high priority to supporting existing, and developing new, job training and retraining centers in the Cluster to serve area and City residents by:
  - developing programs and strategies to increase resident awareness of existing programs through improved outreach (e.g., Wayne Family Training Center, Job Corps, Detroit Works, Detroit Economic Collaborative of Churches; Family Independence Agency; Michigan Employment Securities Administration) and establishing a forum for coordinating programs to ensure that resources are used efficiently/effectively;
  - developing partnerships with area educational institutions (Wayne County Community College; Golightly Voc Tech Center, Wayne State University), labor unions and businesses (manufacturing, health care, retail, service, etc.) to design and implement job skills programs, provide on-the-job apprenticeships and give job training graduates a direct link to employers/employment; and
  - developing, and seeking funding for, training and apprenticeship programs in housing repair, rehab and new construction (at both the contractor and skilled construction trades levels), working in partnership with private companies/contractors and non-profit programs (such as Habitat for Humanity).

# Recommendations and Priorities

3. Establish a Cluster-based organization (or consortium of existing organizations) devoted to working with the City (and the Empowerment Zone and Renaissance Zone Boards) to:

- assemble land;
- provide incentives for new jobs-related development and upgrading the physical appearance and environmental compliance of existing businesses;
- facilitate access to financing;
- cut red tape; and
- market Cluster 3 as a desirable/competitive jobs location.

This organization should also work with corporations/industries already based in the area to:

- encourage job expansion;
  - collaborate in developing job training programs for area residents;
  - promote the hiring of area residents;
  - cooperate in improving the area housing stock to provide close-to-work living opportunities for employees; and
  - collaborate with other programs/businesses to provide affordable, quality daycare.
4. Work with the City to ensure that future large-scale job center reinvestments:
    - fit more sensitively within the community physical context (e.g., circulation and land use patterns; upgrading housing in the adjacent area) ;
    - consider impacts (e.g., truck routes) beyond site boundaries;
    - offer economic benefits to the immediate area (e.g., expanded job training and employment opportunities, retail sales); and
    - involve community groups and citizens in decision-making.

## Locations

5. Encourage the growth of retail and service jobs in identified neighborhood commercial reinvestment target areas:
  - Warren and Conner ;
  - Warren and East Outer Drive;
  - Warren at a selected location between Outer Drive and Mack;

# Recommendations and Priorities

- Warren at a selected location between Cadillac and St. Jean;
  - Mack and Alter;
  - Mack at a selected location/blockfronts between Van Dyke and Cadillac and between Cadillac and Beniteau;
  - Kercheval and Parker;
  - Jefferson (south side) between Montclair and St. Jean;
  - Jefferson (both sides) between Coplin and Alter; and
  - Van Dyke near Gratiot.
6. Encourage a mix of retail and non-retail/service jobs-related reinvestment at the Warren/Conner intersection.
  7. Encourage the growth of manufacturing jobs in smaller scale enterprises in the Mt. Elliott/Bellevue industrial corridor, north of Lafayette.
  8. Explore the feasibility of assembling an appropriately sized site for business park development in the northwest corner of the Cluster between I-94 and East Grand Boulevard from Mt. Elliott to Frontenac (including the Renaissance Zone) in combination with improvements to facilitate northbound access to the I-94/Mt. Elliott interchange.
  9. Expand the jobs corridor north of Warren between Conner and a realigned St. Jean, connecting to an improved French Road/I-94 interchange.
    - Retain existing viable uses (e.g., Wayne County Community College; Mercy Hospital) and allow for their expansion.
    - Assemble land north of Shoemaker for jobs-related redevelopment.
  10. Ensure that the jobs-related reinvestment area located south of Jefferson between St. Jean and Conner is planned and developed to include east-west greenway linkages allowing public access.

# Recommendations and Priorities

## Transportation

### Transit

1. Improve the perceived safety of public transit by:
  - assigning police officers, or police reserves, to ride buses;
  - providing attractively designed, easily recognizable well lit shelters (with mapped routes and schedules) at important stops (to be designated with community input).
2. Encourage Detroit and regional, public and private transit providers to collaborate in providing improved service from the Cluster to important City of Detroit and suburban destinations, as well as between activity centers within the Cluster.
  - Give priority to routes serving major employment, education/training and shopping destinations.
  - Promote the location of transfer points (linking city, suburban and Cluster service) at mixed use centers within the Cluster (e.g., Warren/Conner and/or Jefferson/Conner).
  - Encourage the expanded use of shuttles sponsored by businesses/corporations and non-profits to enhance access to jobs, jobs training, shopping, day care, etc.
3. Encourage land use patterns and development densities along major streets (for example, Jefferson and Gratiot) that support increased transit use/ridership and future improvements in transit service (for example, light rail, trolleys) by concentrating population and activity within an easy walk of major transit routes.
4. Encourage mixed use development patterns, in combination with streetscape and open space improvements, to allow and encourage the use of non-vehicular transportation alternatives.

### Truck Traffic

5. Give high priority to solving problems related to truck traffic on residential streets (especially during the construction period on I-94).
  - Designate and improve preferred truck routes (for example, better pavement, wider turning radii, better signage) and work with area corporations to encourage their voluntary use.
  - Enforce speed limits on all routes used by trucks.

# Recommendations and Priorities

- Identify Warren as the preferred truck route during the I-94 construction period.
  - Improve I-94 on/off ramps at Conner and French Road, and at Mt. Elliott and East Grand Boulevard, and connect these interchanges with service drives.
  - Identify Conner and St. Jean as the preferred truck routes in the longer term.
6. Review the costs and benefits of the existing ordinance prohibiting City designation and enforcement of truck routes; revise ordinance as necessary.

## Road Repaving

7. Gain a better understanding of City, County and State criteria for selecting road improvement/repaving projects and a stronger voice in the decision-making process for roads within the Cluster.
8. Encourage the City to coordinate road and infrastructure improvement investments and phasing (street repaving, sidewalk and curb and gutter improvements, street lighting, park improvements, etc.) with reinvestment in proposed jobs, housing and neighborhood commercial target areas.

## Auto Insurance

9. Develop a city-wide strategy for reducing auto insurance rates.
- Identify and independently measure those factors which contribute to higher rates.
  - Reduce the incidence of those factors (e.g., unrecovered car thefts, accident rates, poor road conditions).
  - Ask for/increase City representation on the State Insurance Commission.

## Environment

### Riverfront/Greenway Linkages

1. Protect and expand green space and public access on the riverfront and link neighborhoods to the River with greenways and walk and bike routes.
- Maintain public access to and public use of all City-owned riverfront parks.

# Recommendations and Priorities

2. Increase community stewardship of existing parks to augment City funding commitments.
  - Encourage neighborhood organizations and non-profits to Adopt-a-Park.
  - Encourage area corporations/businesses, foundations and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to contribute to park improvement and maintenance.
3. Develop a proposed framework of open space linkages, and guidelines to promote design consistency; require new developments to honor and implement the framework and guidelines.

## **Contaminated Sites/Environmental Issues**

4. **Have the City Department of Environmental Affairs create remedial action plans for brownfield sites and other environmentally degraded areas in the Cluster including, for example, Fox Creek combined sewer overflows and the high incidence of lead poisoning in some areas.**

## **Dumping, Junked Cars and Vacant Lots**

5. Increase City capacity to enforce existing laws and regulations designed to prevent unlawful use of land and property (public and private), including illegal dumping, junked cars and lack of vacant lot maintenance by adding enforcement officers and increasing penalties.
  - Establish and maintain community "watch" programs and educate residents/stakeholders on how to document and report illegal activities, who to contact, how to follow up, etc.
  - Provide funding for community groups to maintain vacant lots.
  - Reinvest fines collected in improved enforcement and expanded clean-up efforts.
6. **To improve the maintenance of vacant lots and encourage their productive re-use, give property owners the right (and the first opportunity) to purchase adjacent, vacant parcels; give qualified non-profit development organizations the opportunity to purchase vacant parcels not acquired by adjacent property owners.**

# Recommendations and Priorities

## Youth Development General

1. Provide a continuum of family/youth support services including education, prevention and intervention programs that provide professional and community support in addressing the challenges children and families face from birth to young adulthood.

### Job Training

2. As an important youth development priority, create partnerships between educational institutions, job training organizations, and businesses/employers to increase the availability of and access to training and entrepreneurial programs designed with employer input and linked to internships/apprenticeships.
3. Capitalize on the knowledge and volunteer efforts of seniors and adults in providing neighborhood-based career and life skills programs for youth (including, for example, carpentry, car/bike repair, sewing, cooking, etc.).
4. Increase City commitment to job training and job creation through youth employment programs sponsored by City departments (Parks and Recreation, DPW) and economic development efforts.
  - Create jobs close to home so that commuting to the suburbs is not necessary.
  - Link economic development incentives to youth training/employment programs.
  - Link capital budget allocations/expenditures to youth employment opportunities (e.g., a percentage dedicated to training/jobs for youth).
  - Encourage the Mayor to use his leadership position in stressing youth programs and youth participation.
5. Reduce barriers to youth participation in job training and employment programs by linking them to life skills and drug rehab programs which give young people a "second chance" to qualify.

### Education

6. Establish a community-controlled Task Force to work with Boards of educational institutions (including the Detroit Public Schools, alternative schools receiving public funding, community colleges and state institutions of higher education) to increase accountability and responsiveness in providing an effective system of lifelong learning.

## Recommendations and Priorities

7. Increase community involvement in the Detroit Public Schools to enrich the school curriculum and help to improve educational outcomes.
8. Increase the use of schools as a community resource and base for community activities.

### **Recreation**

9. Promote cooperation between the Detroit Public Schools, Detroit Public Library and the City to make more effective use of public school sites, libraries and recreation centers to improve the geographic distribution and hours of availability of recreational/cultural facilities and to provide state-of-the-art programs (for example, information technology) throughout the Cluster.
10. Expand program development and funding support for youth-oriented recreation programs by establishing partnerships with area businesses.